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# Two say they gave literature to farmers in Soviet Union

By Bill Gertz  
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An Afghan guerrilla and an American lobbyist said yesterday they slipped into the Soviet Union to distribute religious literature to Moslem farmers in Soviet Central Asia.

Matthew D. Erulker, a former Peace Corps volunteer who now runs the Afghan Support Team, told reporters he witnessed several battles between Mujahideen guerrillas and Afghan and Soviet troops before making a brief visit to a Soviet border village last fall during a four-month trip to Afghanistan.

"This is the genocide in our generation," said Mr. Erulker, 28, the grandson of a close aide to the late Mohandas Gandhi.

Mohammad Tahir, a 25-year-old Afghan fighter from the northern city of Kunduz near the Soviet border, said Afghan Muslims have contacted Soviet farmers, who requested historical information about the Basmachi revolt. The Basmachis were Central Asian Moslems who revolted against communist rule in 1919 and were suppressed by the Red Army in 1928.

During the three-day incursion into the Soviet Union, Mr. Tahir was wounded when a booby trap he had planned to set for Soviet KGB border guards accidentally exploded, burning over 20 percent of his body and blinding his right eye.

Mr. Erulker said the trip into the Soviet Union was one of between 30 and 40 trips taken by Mujahideen guerrillas in the Kunduz region to spread Islam among Soviet Asian farmers. Military forays into the Soviet Union are rare since there are few military targets, he said.

"The idea is to help the Soviet empire rot away from inside," Mr. Erul-



Mohammad Tahir

ker said in an interview.

A group of about 15 guerrillas traveled into Soviet territory disguised as a hunting party and carrying copies of the Koran for distribution, he said. They made it to the outskirts of the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic city of Pyandz, 40 miles north of Kunduz along the Amu River before returning to Afghanistan.

Mr. Erulker said the Soviet border is "studded" with light towers, minefields, tank traps and barbed wire, but that his group crossed the Amu in a swampy region with little Soviet border security.

Reports reaching the guerrillas from Soviet bases said a Soviet base commander had offered a reward for capture of Mr. Erulker who had become known as "Matin," which in

the Afghan language means "strong."

"The Soviet base commander at Kunduz said, 'I don't care how many men it takes — 100, 200 or 500 — I want that American captured alive,'" said Mr. Erulker who eluded capture by traveling using identity papers of Saudi Arabian, Soviet, Pakistani and Afghan nationals.

In Paktia province, Mr. Erulker went along on a 4½-hour Afghan guerrilla attack with 107mm missiles against a Soviet garrison at the town of Syed Karem.

"That was highly successful in that the [Democratic Republic of Afghanistan] Army withdrew their forces the next day," he said.

Mr. Tahir said guerrillas have launched successful attacks on Soviet military convoys traveling along roads from the Soviet Union to the Afghan capital of Kabul.

"Despite primitive weapons and lack of outside aid, we have managed to resist unbelievably and control over 80 percent of our land," Mr. Tahir told reporters.

On the question of U.S. covert military aid to the Afghan guerrillas, Mr. Erulker said his trip convinced him that effective weapons have begun to reach the resistance fighters. But he said the Afghan resistance needs more advanced arms and fewer shipments of Russian-made AK-47s.

"This is not a small arms war," he said. "It's a war that will be won by Stingers [anti-aircraft missiles], RPGs [anti-tank guns], mines, mortars."

The Reagan administration has begun supplying Stinger anti-aircraft missiles to the Afghans and resistance forces in Angola. The missiles are replacing shipments of less-accurate, shorter-range SAM-7 missiles.